

TRAVEL EXPENSE ACCOUNTING VIA ROBOTIC PROCESS AUTOMATION

DEUTSCHE BAHN REACHES ROI WITHIN ONE YEAR THROUGH AUTOMATION AND PROCESS OUTSOURCING



«Robotic Process Automation, process optimization and the competent SPS service team ensure an economical and smooth accounting process, so that the accounting period for travel expenses for our employees is shortened. The RPA solution has taken us forward in terms of quality and efficiency.»

– Oliver Hebold, Head of Service Design, Strategic Projects & Travel Expense Accounting at DB Personalservice, Deutsche Bahn AG

Deutsche Bahn's approximately 300,000 employees ensure efficient mobility and logistics in 130 countries worldwide. For the approximately 200,000 employees in Germany, this leads to around 1.4 million business trips per year, which were handled manually in the past. By automating this process using a Robotic Process Automation (RPA) solution from SPS, the accounting period was reduced by 70% with a return on investment within just one year.

In today's digital age, paper travel expense reports are still widely used. This leads to high administrative costs and long waiting periods for employees. Due to the manual processing in the accounting system, the examination of the documents as well as the physical archiving of the documents, backlogs in processing repeatedly occurred during volume peaks.

However, there are already very good and efficient alternatives to manual processing: RPA-based solutions can provide significant improvement. SPS, an automation expert, was commissioned to design and implement a scalable solution. The RPA technology necessary for an optimization is located in the German high performance computing center of SPS, the entire process was conceived GDPR-compliant and implemented under consideration of all legal requirements in several steps.



70 %

shorter processing time
due to RPA solution



About Deutsche Bahn

The Deutsche Bahn Group is an international provider of mobility and logistics services and operates worldwide in over 130 countries. More than 300,000 employees, around 200,000 of them in Germany, work daily to ensure mobility and logistics for its customers.

Learn more about
our solutions:



SPS 
Swiss Post Solutions

Step-by-step optimization for sustainable success

The first step was the development and introduction of a smartphone application by SPS, which simplified the input by the employee and accelerated the transmission of the data. All travel data and documents such as hotel bills or taxi receipts are conveniently scanned and structured directly on the smartphone. After an initial preliminary check, these are transferred to the SPS server.

This simplified capture process has already brought measurable benefits. The subsequent processing by the RPA solution, which simulates activities on the graphical user interface, then shortened the processing time for travel expense requests by a total of 70%.

Automated processes thanks to RPA solution

Once the structured digital data has been transferred, it is first checked for correctness using a configured set of rules. For correct accounting, the browser is opened and the RPA solution logs into the customer system. The business trip is created for the employee and all travel data is entered field by field. Then the accounting is carried out, a PDF is generated and the case is closed. The average duration for successfully completed transactions is 60 seconds.



60 sec.
average processing time

Accounting statements that do not comply with legal or group-internal travel expense regulations are recognized by QA and marked for manual processing.

During the conception of the solution, the SPS experts also focused on a cost-oriented implementation. 100% automation, in which all exceptions are taken into account, can hardly be realized economically. SPS relies on the sensible combination of RPA technology and professionally experienced employees who take care of the exemptions.

To ensure that employees who do not bill by smartphone also benefit from the RPA solution, they transmit the paper documents to the SPS service team. SPS employees digitize the documents so that everything is processed via RPA - regardless of whether the employee submits digitally or in paper form.

CIP for RPA and processes

The RPA-based workflow, which manages the entire process from capture to payout, was developed and configured by SPS automation experts. At SPS, eight systems currently ensure the fast and legally compliant processing of approximately 120,000 travel expense reports per month. These are consistently further optimized in a Continuous Improvement Process (CIP) in order to constantly increase the degree of automation.



92,6 %
of applications without
manual post-processing

In the CIP, the cause for the rejection of applications is determined and then, if economically viable, eliminated by extending the software, the configuration or the rules and regulations. For example, entry errors were prevented by replacing keyboard entries with dropdown selections. However, process changes can also help to ensure that

more documents are processed right away. SPS's cost-oriented approach has contributed significantly to the RPA solution achieving a return on investment within one year.



ROI
within a year
